

# **Effective Multinational C2: Five Essential Variables**

**A Monograph**

**by**

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**14. ABSTRACT**

United States armed forces have historically fought alongside allied forces, and are currently engaged in several multinational operations around the world. Most, if not all, future U.S. military peacekeeping, combat, or stability operations will continue to consist of multinational structures commonly known as coalitions or alliances. The inherent complexity of creating an effective multinational Command and Control (C2) structure, comprised of different countries and operating under unfamiliar C2 structures, creates tension in achieving unity of effort, unity of command and unity of action towards subsequent mission accomplishment. Historically this tension has revolved around the issue of multinational C2. Differences in national interests, culture, and incompatibilities in operating procedures, technologies, training and operational capabilities add to the tension posed by multinational operations.

Fortunately, U.S. Joint, U.S. service, and NATO doctrine, as well as history, provide useful guidelines to ameliorate the tension posed by multinational differences and incompatibilities towards effective multinational C2. A synthesis of the doctrinal foundations of C2 and four historic multinational operations, namely World War I, World War II, the Persian Gulf War, and ISAF, led to the identification of five essential variables that must be addressed and implemented in order to establish effective multinational C2. These variables are the need for establishing unity of purpose through international legitimacy; the need for an integrated multinational command structure in achieving unity of command; the need for an educated human equation; the need for multinational training; and the need for interoperable Communications and Information Systems (CIS) in exercising effective multinational C2. If these five variables are not adequately addressed, then effective multinational C2 will be difficult to achieve.

The five essential variables are summarized as follows: (1) There is a need for establishing unity of purpose through international legitimacy. This is achieved through gaining the support of an internationally recognized civil authority in order to avoid unilateral action. Unity of purpose further facilitates the generation of unified goals amongst the participants; (2) Unity of command must be established by appointing a single multinational commander with overall responsibility for the mission. This is further enhanced through an integrated multinational staff and headquarters C2 structure. Through inclusion, the multinational commander is able to garner a better understanding of participating nations' interests, capabilities, and nuances; (3) There must be an educated human equation present to develop respect, rapport, and cultural understanding at all levels within the multinational force. Human equations encompass those characteristics that multinational commanders and staffs must display to build a cohesive multinational force; (4) Multinational training contributes to building an understanding of potential alliance or coalition partners' capabilities, strengths, and challenges. Multinational training exercises should be conducted during peacetime, but should continue after deployment, especially when working with nations that do not habitually participate in multinational training venues; (5) There must be an interoperable Communications and Information Systems (CIS) architecture established within the multinational operation. An interoperable CIS facilitates C2 through the establishment of compatible procedures and equipment which leads to effective information flow within the multinational force.

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## Abstract

EFFECTIVE MULTINATIONAL C2: FIVE ESSENTIAL VARIABLES by Major Jon E. Baker, U.S. Army, 48 pages.

United States armed forces have historically fought alongside allied forces, and are currently engaged in several multinational operations around the world. Most, if not all, future U.S. military peacekeeping, combat, or stability operations will continue to consist of multinational structures commonly known as coalitions or alliances. The inherent complexity of creating an effective multinational Command and Control (C2) structure, comprised of different countries and operating under unfamiliar C2 structures, creates tension in achieving unity of effort, unity of command and unity of action towards subsequent mission accomplishment. Historically this tension has revolved around the issue of multinational C2. Differences in national interests, culture, and incompatibilities in operating procedures, technologies, training and operational capabilities add to the tension posed by multinational operations.

Fortunately, U.S. Joint, U.S. service, and NATO doctrine, as well as history, provide useful guidelines to ameliorate the tension posed by multinational differences and incompatibilities towards effective multinational C2. A synthesis of the doctrinal foundations of C2 and four historic multinational operations, namely World War I, World War II, the Persian Gulf War, and ISAF, led to the identification of five essential variables that must be addressed and implemented in order to establish effective multinational C2. These variables are the need for establishing unity of purpose through international legitimacy; the need for an integrated multinational command structure in achieving unity of command; the need for an educated human equation; the need for multinational training; and the need for interoperable Communications and Information Systems (CIS) in exercising effective multinational C2. If these five variables are not adequately addressed, then effective multinational C2 will be difficult to achieve.

The five essential variables are summarized as follows: (1) There is a need for establishing unity of purpose through international legitimacy. This is achieved through gaining the support of an internationally recognized civil authority in order to avoid unilateral action. Unity of purpose further facilitates the generation of unified goals amongst the participants; (2) Unity of command must be established by appointing a single multinational commander with overall responsibility for the mission. This is further enhanced through an integrated multinational staff and headquarters C2 structure. Through inclusion, the multinational commander is able to garner a better understanding of participating nations' interests, capabilities, and nuances; (3) There must be an educated human equation present to develop respect, rapport, and cultural understanding at all levels within the multinational force. Human equations encompass those characteristics that multinational commanders and staffs must display to build a cohesive multinational force; (4) Multinational training contributes to building an understanding of potential alliance or coalition partners' capabilities, strengths, and challenges. Multinational training exercises should be conducted during peacetime, but should continue after deployment, especially when working with nations that do not habitually participate in multinational training venues; (5) There must be an interoperable Communications and Information Systems (CIS) architecture established within the multinational operation. An interoperable CIS facilitates C2 through the establishment of compatible procedures and equipment which leads to effective information flow within the multinational force.

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## Introduction

United States armed forces have historically fought alongside allied forces, and are currently engaged in several multinational operations around the world. Most, if not all, future U.S. military peacekeeping, combat, or stability operations will continue to consist of multinational structures commonly known as coalitions or alliances. The inherent complexity of creating an effective multinational Command and Control (C2) structure, comprised of different countries and operating under unfamiliar C2 structures, creates tension in achieving unity of effort, unity of command and unity of action towards subsequent mission accomplishment.<sup>1</sup> LtCol Michael Canna, an Atlantic Council Senior Fellow, pointed out that this “tension has centered historically on the issue of command and control.”<sup>2</sup> Differences in national interests, culture, and incompatibilities in operating procedures, technologies, training and operational capabilities add to the tension posed by multinational operations. A multinational commander, faced with these issues, can barely hope to establish a functional, let alone optimal, C2 arrangement or structure.

To achieve an effective multinational C2 structure within a coalition or alliance, at a minimum the following five essential variables must be addressed and implemented at the strategic and operational levels. First, there is a need for establishing unity of purpose through international legitimacy. This is achieved through gaining the support of an internationally

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Axelrod and Michael D. Cohen, *Harnessing Complexity: Organizational Implications of a Scientific Frontier* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), xv. As stated in *Harnessing Complexity*, complexity deals with systems composed of many interacting agents. While complex systems may be hard to predict, they may also have a good deal of structure and permit improvement by thoughtful intervention; U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 6-0, Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, August 2003, 1-2 & 3-3. Effective C2 has the following characteristics: (1) ability to identify and react to changes in the situation, (2) ability to provide a continuous, interactive process of reciprocal influence among the commander, staff, and available forces, and (3) ability to reduce chaos and lessen uncertainty. An effective C2 system allows the commander to operate freely throughout the AO to exercise C2 from anywhere on the battlefield; delegate authority to subordinate commanders and staff to allow decentralized execution of operations; synchronize actions throughout the AO; and focus on critical actions instead of details.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Canna, LtCol, USAF, “Command and Control of Multinational Operations Involving U.S. Military Forces” (Occasional Paper, Atlantic Council, 2004), vii.

recognized civil authority in order to avoid unilateral action. Unity of purpose further facilitates the generation of unified goals amongst the participants. Second, unity of command must be established by appointing a single multinational commander with overall responsibility for the mission. This is further enhanced through an integrated multinational staff and headquarters C2 structure. Through inclusion, the multinational commander is able to garner a better understanding of participating nations' interests, capabilities, and nuances. Third, there must be an educated human equation present to develop respect, rapport, and cultural understanding at all levels within the multinational force.<sup>3</sup> Human equations encompass those characteristics that multinational commanders and staffs must display to build a cohesive multinational force. Fourth, multinational training contributes to building an understanding of potential alliance or coalition partners' capabilities, strengths, and challenges. Multinational training exercises should be conducted during peacetime, but should continue after deployment, especially when working with nations that do not habitually participate in multinational training venues. Finally, there must be an interoperable Communications and Information Systems (CIS) architecture established within the multinational operation. An interoperable CIS facilitates C2 through the establishment of compatible procedures and equipment which leads to effective information flow within the multinational force.

As mentioned, multinational military operations are the future. In order to operate effectively within these operations one must analyze the policies, doctrine, and literature that address the various aspects of multinational operations. Without an understanding of the theoretical foundations behind such operations and a thorough historical analysis of past multinational operations, the future military practitioner is doomed to relearn the lessons of the past. This paper helps the military practitioner learn from the past by introducing the doctrinal underpinning of C2 in multinational operations through analyzing the purpose of multinational

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed description of the human equation see page 38 of this paper.

C2, types of multinational structures, and the types of authority multinational forces can operate under.<sup>4</sup> The author then analyzes four case studies at the strategic and operational levels, where U.S. forces participated or are participating within a multinational setting, to identify how multinational C2 has evolved, and what key variables facilitated or hindered effective multinational C2 in each case. Finally, the author synthesizes the doctrinal foundation of C2 and case studies into five key variables which, if implemented, can ameliorate the tension posed by multinational differences and incompatibilities towards effective multinational C2.

## **Understanding Multinational C2**

*A coalition must share a common doctrine to take advantage of commonalities.*

General Robert W. RisCassi, USA  
“Principles For Coalition Warfare,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*  
Summer 1993

C2 in multinational operations is complex because these types of operations require the coordinated and synchronized actions of two or more nations in the context of an alliance or coalition towards commonly established objectives. The multinational commander(s) addresses this complexity by establishing unity of effort amongst the partner nations involved in a given operation through decentralized execution. U.S. Department of Defense, *Field Manual 6-0, Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, defines unity of effort as the “coordination and cooperation among all military forces and other organizations toward a commonly recognized objective, even if the forces and nonmilitary organizations are not

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. joint and service doctrine, combined with NATO doctrine, are used to inform this paper. U.S. doctrine is useful and appropriate for multinational operations because it is based on corporate U.S. knowledge, experience, and lessons learned, thus it provides an informed starting point to plan and execute current and future multinational operations. U.S. doctrine provides a wealth of knowledge on how the U.S. can operate within alliances and coalitions; it is not prescriptive in nature but acknowledges that each multinational setting requires an adaptive and flexible approach.

necessarily part of the same command structure.”<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)*, states that “an objective is the clearly defined, decisive attainable goal towards which every military operation should be directed...objectives provide the focus for military action; they are essential for unity of effort.”<sup>6</sup> As mentioned, unity of effort does not only apply to military forces but includes non-military organizations. These non-military organizations encompass intergovernmental (IGO) and non-governmental (NGO) organizations. All of these entities not only have their own established procedures, but in turn have their own objectives which may or may not align with the established military objectives. Thus, a commander must ensure that his C2 structure provides procedures for the synchronization of IGO and NGO efforts within established military objectives. U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0, Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations*, proposes the use of “committees, steering groups, or interagency working groups organized by functional needs” as a means by which to achieve this synchronization.<sup>7</sup>

A good example of how this was accomplished is provided in a *Joint Force Quarterly* article titled, “Joint Interagency Cooperation: The First Step,” which outlines how the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) established just such an operational level structure in 2001, called the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG). Like all new interagency structures the JIACG evolved until in 2003 it had “grown to 28 military and 54 civilian members” which included representatives from “the Department of Energy, the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Internal Revenue Service, and the State Department’s International Information Programs.” The JIACG, by providing a

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 6-0, Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, August 2003, 2-7.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)*, 10 July 2001, GL-10.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 5-0, Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations*, 26 December 2006, II-7.

coordination structure which facilitated interagency and USCENTCOM synchronization, helped create unity of effort in USCENTCOM.<sup>8</sup>

Unity of effort cannot be achieved without subsequent unified action within the multinational force. U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-16, Multinational Operations*, defines multinational unified action as “the synergistic application of all elements of national and multinational power; it includes the actions of non-military organizations as well as military forces.”<sup>9</sup> A clear commander’s intent is essential to achieving multinational unified action. The innate power of the commander’s intent in achieving unity of effort through unified action is appropriately encapsulated in the following quote by Field Marshal Sir William Slim:

I suppose dozens of operations orders have gone out in my name, but I never, throughout the war, actually wrote one myself. I always had someone who could do that better than I could. One part of the order I did, however, draft myself--the intention. It is usually the shortest of all paragraphs, but it is always the most important, because it states—or it should—just what the commander intends to achieve. It is the one overriding expression of will by which everything in the order and every action by every commander and soldier in the army must be dominated. It should, therefore, be worded by the commander, himself.<sup>10</sup>

The commander’s intent enables subordinate commanders the freedom to execute synchronized initiative through decentralized decision making.

One way to enhance unified action is to conduct multinational training using scenarios that are common to the contemporary operating environment (COE). Training should include tactical and operational level headquarters, as well as tactical level forces. Not only should these training venues be used during peacetime, but also in preparation of multinational forces for an ongoing operation. *Joint Publication 3-16* describes how these forces can subsequently be

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew F. Bogdanos, “Joint Interagency Cooperation: The First Step,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, 37, (April 2005), 10-18.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-16, Multinational Operations*, 7 March 2007, III-12.

<sup>10</sup> Field-Marshal Viscount Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 210-211.

validated or certified “by a team composed of members from all nations providing military forces to the multinational force commander (MNFC).”<sup>11</sup> The end result of multinational training opportunities is a greater understanding of various nations’ capabilities, doctrine, and an ability to achieve interoperability. Unfortunately, these training venues usually involve only those nations that are part of an alliance, and rarely those multinational forces that may participate in coalitions.<sup>12</sup>

Unified action and the resultant unity of effort are ideally achieved through unity of command. According to United States Army doctrine “unity of command is the Army’s preferred method for achieving unity of effort.” Unity of command implies that “any mission falls within the authority and responsibility of a single, responsible commander.”<sup>13</sup> Unity of command reduces confusion and friction by establishing one commander and headquarters as the source for all communications and operations. Despite unity of command being the ideal means to achieve unity of effort, there are instances where it may not be possible to establish unity of command. This can occur in certain multinational operations in which participating nations refuse to subordinate their forces to any one nation. This does not mean that unity of effort cannot be achieved. Instead, multinational commanders can establish coordination cells and liaisons between participating forces to ensure that unity of effort is achieved.<sup>14</sup>

## **Types of Multinational C2 Structures**

There is no single C2 arrangement that meets every multinational command requirement, but there are three basic types of structures that are outlined in U.S. and NATO doctrine. Each of these structures offers a unique way of achieving unity of effort and possibly unity of command.

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 3-16*, III-12.

<sup>12</sup> For a definition and discussion of coalitions and alliances see pages 9-10 of this paper.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. DA, *Field Manual 6-0*, 2-8.

<sup>14</sup> For further information about how unity of effort can be achieved without unity of command see the Persian Gulf War: Desert Shield and Desert Storm on pages 21-25 of this paper.

According to *Joint Publication 3-16* the common types are “integrated, lead nation, and parallel,” whereas, in Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B) the corresponding NATO structures are referred to as “fully integrated, framework nation, and bi- or multi-national” respectively.<sup>15</sup> The key to an integrated (fully integrated) multinational command structure is unity of effort. An integrated (fully integrated) multinational command structure achieves unity of effort and command through a “designated single commander; the staff is composed of representatives from all member nations; and subordinate commands and staffs are integrated into the lowest echelon necessary to accomplish the mission.” A lead nation (framework nation) multinational command structure entails all participating nations placing their forces under the C2 of one nation. Though this C2 arrangement is “distinguished by a dominant lead nation command and staff arrangement,” it often includes an integrated multinational staff so that the commander can draw on external national knowledge not resident in the lead nation staff members. Finally, a parallel (bi- or multi-national) multinational C2 structure is characterized by the absence of one dominant nation or force commander. This unique structure is mainly based on agreements between the various nations to place their forces under a certain nation’s C2 and not others. Political and cultural considerations often play a key role in driving the establishment of a parallel C2 structure. This results in each multinational force being supported and controlled by their relevant provider state. Parallel structures often require coordination and synchronization through the establishment of coordination centers in order to achieve unity of effort.<sup>16</sup>

Each of the previously mentioned multinational C2 structures can be established either within the context of an alliance or a coalition. In U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02, DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, an alliance is defined as a “relationship

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<sup>15</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 3-16*, II-5; *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)*, December 2002, 1-7. For the purpose of this paper the author uses the U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-16* terms to discuss multinational C2 structures.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 3-16*, II-6-II-8.

that results from a formal agreement (e.g. treaty) between two or more nations for broad and long-term objectives that further the common interests of the members.”<sup>17</sup> *Joint Publication 3-16* expounds on alliance C2:

Typically, alliance command structures have been carefully developed over extended periods of time and have a high degree of stability and consensus; doctrine and standardization characterize alliances. Established command structures may be modified or tailored for particular operations, especially when combined operations include non-allied members. However, using an alliance’s structures for purposes other than those for which their integrated structures were designed, or in operations for which they have not had the lead time necessary to develop integrated plans and structures, may result in behavior that more closely approximates that of a coalition.<sup>18</sup>

This description particularly applies to NATO. NATO is an alliance originally established to address Cold War tensions between member states and the Soviet Union. With the demise of the Cold War, NATO became more involved in small-scale contingency operations, otherwise known as stability operations, with non-alliance states.

*Joint Publication 1-02* defines a coalition as “an ad hoc arrangement between two or more nations for common action.”<sup>19</sup> Coalitions are established when a conflict arises which is outside of the purview of existing alliances or exceed the capabilities of established alliances. They are characterized by a lack of the formal agreements and treaties that are inherent to alliances. Issues in compatibility and interoperability often arise due to the ad hoc nature of a coalition. Coalition commanders may find themselves working with multinational forces for which they have no understanding of their doctrine, force capabilities, or cultural nuances. According to *Joint Publication 3-16*, this friction is further compounded by the national interests of participating nations, thus “at the outset of a coalition, nations are often reluctant to grant

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02, DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, as amended through 30 May 2008, 38.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 3-16*, II-8.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 1-02*, 92.

extensive control over their forces to one lead nation” and “are sensitive to actions that might be construed as preferential to the lead nation’s interests.”<sup>20</sup> Recent history is replete with examples of United States participation in coalitions despite these issues that arise due to the ad hoc nature of coalitions.<sup>21</sup>

No matter what type of structure a multinational operation takes, Canna determined that there is a need for “a clear, common understanding of the terms used to describe command and control of military forces” in order to facilitate mutual understanding amongst participating nations’ forces. As mentioned previously, alliances often have well established C2 structures, experience working together resulting in a commonly shared military lexicon, and an understanding of each other’s capabilities which result in a commonly agreed upon doctrine. This shared and agreed upon understanding often is not found in coalitions where their ad hoc nature, in which they are created, results in the lack of a mutually understood military lexicon. Without a common framework to refer to, coalition C2 is often fraught with confusion and friction. The ad hoc nature of coalition staffs also affects how effective C2 is exercised. Although these problems can be ameliorated by conducting multinational operations with nations that habitually work together in alliances, Canna pointed out that historically “the inclusion of non-alliance coalition members and the political views of all coalition participants dictate that each coalition will have its own unique command and control challenges.”<sup>22</sup>

## **C2 of Multinational Forces**

Regardless of whether the type of multinational C2 structure operates under an alliance or coalition model, most nations are not willing to relinquish national command authority over their forces. According to *Joint Publication 3-16*, this inevitably results in a coalition or alliance

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<sup>20</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 3-16*, II-9.

<sup>21</sup> For examples of U.S. participation in coalitions see pages 12-27 of this paper.

<sup>22</sup> Canna, 5.

answering to two distinct and separate “chains of command: a national chain of command and a multinational chain of command.” *Joint Publication 3-16* further points out that each participating nation exercises national command authority by “organizing, directing, coordinating, controlling, planning employment, and protecting” the forces they contribute to the multinational operation.<sup>23</sup> Multinational command is usually negotiated and agreed upon by the national command authorities resident in the contributing nations. Thus, as Canna outlines, “the multinational commander has to strike a delicate balance between managing a heterogeneous military force with preeminent allegiance to their national governments and subject to the desires of their respective political leadership, and employing these forces as a homogenous fighting force with maximum military effectiveness.”<sup>24</sup>

*Joint Publication 3-16* outlines four types of command authority which a multinational commander can execute; they “range from operational control (OPCON), to tactical control (TACON), to designated support relationships, to coordinating authority.”<sup>25</sup> OPCON, as defined in *AAP-6 (2007) NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*, is basically “the authority delegated to a commander to direct forces assigned so that the commander may accomplish specific missions or tasks which are usually limited by function, time, or location...it does not include authority to assign separate employment of components of the units concerned.” Under the parameters of OPCON, a commander maintains the ability to consult with their national chain of command in instances where disputes are encountered that cannot be rectified within the multinational chain of command. NATO defines TACON as “the detailed and, usually, local direction and control of movements or manoeuvres necessary to accomplish missions or tasks

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<sup>23</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 3-16*, II-3.

<sup>24</sup> Canna, 8.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 3-16*, II-4.

assigned.<sup>26</sup> Under these circumstances, the multinational commander of the owning unit retains OPCON, as well as, administrative control over their subordinate unit.<sup>27</sup>

The third type of command that can be assumed by a multinational commander revolves around support relationships. In *Joint Publication 3-16*, support relationships are generally defined as “the action of a force that aids, complements, protects, or sustains another force in accordance with a directive requiring such action.”<sup>28</sup> When establishing a support relationship, it is imperative the multinational commander understand what the tasked force’s capabilities are in regards to the supported force’s requirements. This is particularly important when dealing with sustainment operations where unfamiliarity with and incompatibility between systems can lead to mission failure. The last type of multinational command authority is coordinating authority. Coordinating authority is generally used during planning, but there are inherent limitations within this type of authority. NATO’s definition of coordinating authority, as outlined in the *ABCA Coalition Operations Handbook*, reflects the obvious weaknesses of executing this authority in multinational settings, when it defines this authority as:

The authority granted to a commander or individual assigned responsibility for coordinating specific functions or activities involving forces of two or more countries or commands. He has the authority to require consultation between the agencies involved or their representatives, but does not have the authority to compel agreement. In case of disagreement between the agencies involved, he should attempt to obtain essential agreement by discussion. In the event he is unable to obtain essential agreement he shall refer the matter to the appropriate authority.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> AAP-6 (2007), *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions (English and French)*, 2-O-3 & 2-T-2. Operational control (OPCON) is delegated to a commander by a higher commander who has been granted operational command (OPCOM). OPCOM encompasses the authority granted to a commander to assign missions or tasks to subordinate commanders, to deploy units, to reassign forces, and to retain or delegate operational and/or tactical control as the commander deems necessary. Tactical control (TACON) is further executed under the umbrella of tactical command (TACOM). TACOM describes the authority by which a commander can assign tasks to units within his command towards the accomplishment of a mission assigned by a higher commander.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 3-16*, II-4.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 1-02*, 529.

<sup>29</sup> ABCA Program, “ABCA: Optimizing Coalition Interoperability,” <http://www.abca-armies.org> (accessed October 10, 2008), Glossary-11.

This type of multinational command authority highlights how important the human factor is when working in a multinational environment where divergent cultures and doctrinal approaches become apparent. The human factor plays a key role in making coalitions or alliances work, as will be seen in the following historical case studies.

## **Historical Examples of Multinational C2**

*There is little of lasting consequence that the United States can accomplish in the world without the sustained cooperation of its allies and friends in Canada and Europe.*

President George W. Bush  
West Point, New York  
June 1, 2002

The twentieth century provides numerous examples of multinational operations that range from peacekeeping to all out war. The C2 structures that characterize these examples are equally diverse, with some characterized by parallel command structures and others by strong lead nation concepts. What becomes apparent is that there is no single multinational C2 structure that meets all requirements in every situation. As one will see throughout this paper, each multinational C2 structure can be influenced by many unique factors. These factors range from differences in policies and laws to cultural differences that impact whether a nation is willing to allow external C2 of its participating forces. The following section will analyze how multinational C2 was achieved and executed during World War I, World War II, the Persian Gulf War (Operation Desert Shield/Storm), and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in order to determine what key variables are required for the establishment of effective multinational C2.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Analysis of the multinational C2 arrangements during WWI, WWII, and Persian Gulf primarily focus on the build-up to and execution of combat operations, whereas, the ISAF analysis encompasses the build-up through to the present due to its' on-going nature.

## World War I: A Contemporary Beginning<sup>31</sup>

World War I was effectively a war between two large alliances. Colonel Anthony Rice (British Army) in a *Parameters* article titled, “Command and Control: The Essence of Coalition Warfare,” described these alliances as consisting of the “Central Powers (principally Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Turkey) and the Allies (principally France, Russia, the United Kingdom, Italy, and eventually the United States).”<sup>32</sup> The C2 arrangement amongst the Allies, for most of the war, was characterized as what is contemporarily defined as a parallel command structure. Each sovereign nation maintained complete C2 over their forces, and subsequently pursued their own interests. Coordination between the Allied forces was haphazard at best and led to many set-backs during the war.

A lack of Allied unity of effort and command was facilitated by the national guidance given to two of the key participants. For instance, according to Canna, the United Kingdom commander “General Sir Douglas Haig was reminded by the War Minister, Lord Kitchener: ‘Your command is an independent one and you will in any case not come under the orders of any allied general’.”<sup>33</sup> According to John J. Pershing’s memoir, *My Experiences in the First World War, Volume 1*, the United States Secretary of War issued similar guidance to him, when he was assigned as the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) commander, stating: “In operations against the Imperial German government, you are directed to cooperate with the forces of the other countries employed against the enemy; but in doing so the underlying idea must be kept in view

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<sup>31</sup> This section focuses on the C2 structure and issues of the Allies on the Western Front. It does not discuss the C2 structures and issues of the Central Powers, nor does it discuss C2 on the Eastern, Italian, or Middle East Fronts.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony J. Rice, Colonel, British Army, “Command and Control: The Essence of Coalition Warfare”, *Parameters: U.S. Army War College Quarterly*, Spring 1997, 152-167. The U.S. was not a formal ally with Britain, France or Russia but entered the war as an “Associated Power” under the premise that Germany had violated U.S. neutrality by targeting American merchant marine and civilian passenger liners in the Atlantic Ocean.

<sup>33</sup> Canna, 9-10.

that the forces of the United States are a separate and distinct component of the combined forces, the identity of which must be preserved.”<sup>34</sup> David F. Trask points out in his book, *The AEF and Coalition Warmaking 1917-1918*, that General Pershing took this guidance to heart, insisting throughout the war, that U.S. forces would form an “independent American force” under his direct command, and would not serve under British or French command. He would maintain this nationalistic stance despite Allied insistence “to amalgamate American troops into Allied formations” to replace casualties sustained by British and French units.<sup>35</sup> A partial solution to the dysfunctional Allied C2 arrangement would not be established until the final year of the war.

The horrendous casualties suffered by the French and British forces from 1914-1917, and the intelligence that indicated a pending German offensive provided the impetus for the Allies to finally address their lack of unity of effort and command in 1918. Trask points out that the Prime Minister of Great Britain used these factors “to gain the acceptance of an inter-Allied agency, the Supreme War Council, charged with coordinating coalition policy and strategy....Its official mission was ‘to watch over the general conduct of the war’.” The council included the heads of state and a “Permanent Military Representative” from each Allied Power with forces on the western front. These efforts helped immeasurably in beginning the process of establishing unity of effort among the Allied forces. Additional inter-Allied organizations were created at the same time to address other aspects of the war effort. Despite the fact that these additional organizations

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<sup>34</sup> John J. Pershing and Frank E. VanDiver, *My Experiences in the First World War, Vol 1* (New York: De Capo Press, 1995), 38.

<sup>35</sup> David F. Trask, *The AEF and Coalition Warmaking, 1917-1918* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 171 & 18. Amalgamation of Soldiers entailed having one nation’s units or Soldiers serve under the direct C2 of another nation. General Pershing did consent to temporary amalgamation of U.S. Soldiers under British or French C2 if they were needed in an emergency, but the relationship would be temporary, with General Pershing resuming C2 of the U.S. Soldiers after the emergency.

would have been very helpful prior to 1918, “all made valuable contributions to the inter-Allied war effort during 1918.”<sup>36</sup>

March 1918 marked a low point for the Allies due to the near collapse of the Western Front caused by the expected German offensive. The Allied set-backs that occurred during the offensive further helped set the conditions for readdressing the problems of unity of effort and command which were inherent in the Allied C2 structures. Even so, creating additional solutions did not come easy and evolved over time. In the end, “the Prime Ministers of France and the United Kingdom, together with their senior military commanders and General Pershing, met...to review again the command arrangements” so that a unified effort could be established to meet the Central Power threat. Rice points out that during this combined meeting “General Pershing stated the case for unity of command” when he proposed:

The principle of unity of command is undoubtedly the correct one for the Allies to follow. I do not believe that it is possible to have unity of action without a supreme commander. We have already experience enough in trying to coordinate the operations of the Allied Armies without success. There has never been real unity of action. Such coordination between two or three armies is impossible no matter who the commander-in-chief may be. Each commander-in-chief is interested in his own army, and cannot get the other commander’s point of view or grasp the problem as a whole. I am in favor of a supreme commander and believe that the success of the Allied cause depends upon it. I think the necessary action should be taken by this council at once. I am in favor of conferring the supreme command upon General Foch.

The resultant “Beauvais Agreement,” named after the location where the Allies met, led to General Foch’s designation as the Allied supreme commander.<sup>37</sup> Despite being given the authority to direct and coordinate all Allied forces, General Foch was severely hampered in performing these duties. On the other hand, Canna points out that “General Foch’s personal qualities of tact and forbearance with allied commanders aided immeasurably in ensuring unity of

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<sup>36</sup> Trask, 30-32. Among the additional inter-Allied organizations were the Allied Naval Council, the Inter-Allied (Land) Transportation Council, the Allied Blockade Council, the Allied Munitions Council, the Allied Food Council, and the Allied Council on War Purchases and Finance.

<sup>37</sup> Rice, 155.

action within the coalition.”<sup>38</sup> He was a realist in the sense that he understood the complicated dynamics set forth in the Beauvais Agreement, and how fragile his command of the Allies was. General Foch is quoted as stating that “his was the power to persuade and suggest, not order” the allied forces under his command. In his memoirs, General Foch further demonstrated an enlightened understanding of the individual perspectives of Allied nations when he stated:

Each army has its own spirit and tradition; each has to satisfy the requirements of its own government; and the latter, in its turn, has its own particular needs and interests to consider. Moreover, each army has its own characteristic pride, and each rates very high the weight of the burden which the war has brought to it and shows a corresponding hesitation in the face of new efforts and new sacrifices demanded of it by the battle. It follows that common direction is created and maintained above all by the confidence which governments and allied commanders in chief bestow upon some chosen individual.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the consensus that unity of command would be established under General Foch, General Pershing continued to resist the amalgamation of U.S. units into French or British units, insisting that American troops serve only directly under his command in a separate U.S. Army. According to Trask, General Pershing resisted amalgamation until he finally got his wish when the “American First Army” was formed under his command during the Meuse Argonne offensive - contributing to the eventual defeat of Germany.<sup>40</sup>

## **World War II: Refinement<sup>41</sup>**

World War I helped set the ground work for establishing the importance of unity of command and integration that occurred during World War II. Forrest C. Pogue in, *U.S. Army in World War II, The European Theater of Operations: The Supreme Command*, captures this point

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<sup>38</sup> Canna, 11.

<sup>39</sup> Ferdinand Foch (translated by COL. T. Bentley Mott), *The Memoirs of Marshal Foch* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, INC., 1931), 185.

<sup>40</sup> Trask, 94.

<sup>41</sup> This section focuses on the C2 structure and issues of the Allies on Western Front. It does not discuss the C2 structures and issues of the Axis Powers, nor does it discuss Allied C2 in any of the other theaters of operations.

when he stated that initially the Franco-British alliance of 1939-40 mirrored the Allies of World War I by establishing “a Supreme War Council...consisting of the two Prime Ministers, their Foreign Ministers, and their senior military advisors” while a lead nation C2 structure was used within each theater of operations. Under the direction of the Supreme War Council was the Combined Chiefs of Staff structure, consisting of the U.S. and British Chiefs of Staff, with the duties of creating and overseeing the strategic policies and plans for the conduct of the war.<sup>42</sup> Unity of purpose within these structures would be problematic especially at the beginning of the war when the Allies tried to come to a consensus on an overall strategy against Germany.

The British Chiefs of Staff and Prime Minister Churchill, accustomed to long wars on the European continent and casualty adverse, favored an indirect strategy whereby the Allies would use their naval and air superiority to attack the periphery of Germany’s forces. For the British this meant initiating offensive operations in the Mediterranean, the Middle East, or Africa which they considered the soft underbelly of the Axis Powers. On the other hand, the U.S. Chiefs of Staff and initially President Roosevelt favored an immediate cross channel attack aimed directly at the heart of Germany’s forces in France as the preferred strategy. This disagreement on the overall strategy would go on throughout 1941-1942. In the end, U.S. political pressure to initiate U.S. military operations against Germany and the need to relieve pressure on the harried Russian forces in the East would lead President Roosevelt to side with the British. Unity of purpose was thus established through consensus on the British indirect strategy. Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa, became the means by which this would occur.<sup>43</sup>

Despite these attempts at creating strategic unity of purpose, issues in unity of effort arose at the operational level due to the lack of prior Allied coalition or alliance warfighting

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<sup>42</sup> Forrest C. Pogue, *U.S. Army in World War II, The European Theater of Operations: The Supreme Command* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1954), 36-37.

<sup>43</sup> Kent R. Greenfield et al., *Command Decisions* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 1990), 43 & 186-188.

experience. According to Rice, Field Marshal Montgomery emphasized this point when he pointed out that “between September 1939 and May 1940, the Allies had never conducted any exercises, either with or without troops, although an indoor exercise on the model could easily have been held. There was no coordination between the operations of the Belgians, the BEF, and the First French Army.”<sup>44</sup> Pogue further points out that it would not be until 1943 that the Allied nations would agree a Supreme Commander needed to be appointed, and thus unity of command. As they looked for an acceptable candidate, they agreed that an interim solution be implemented to establish unity of effort in the form of the “Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC)” with an associated staff. Due to the British predominance in the Allied European fighting at that time, COSSAC mirrored the British staff structure. Integral to establishing an effective integrated command structure was the inclusion of “liaison missions by the governments-in-exile at COSSAC.” These liaison missions ensured that various occupied nations would have a say in how Allied military operations were conducted within their sovereign boundaries.<sup>45</sup>

Operation Torch, according to Pogue, saw effective multinational unity of command at the Operational level finally established and executed under General Dwight D. Eisenhower as the “Commander in Chief, Allied Forces in North Africa” and later as the “commander of Allied Forces in the Mediterranean.” Despite this arrangement the 1<sup>st</sup> British Army commander, who was placed under Eisenhower’s command, “was given the right of appeal to national authorities...if he felt his army was threatened with dire consequences.” This caveat would be present throughout the war. In order to execute unity of command, General Eisenhower created a completely integrated multinational staff which facilitated C2 throughout his multinational force. His driving force in building unity of command was to escape “the practice of the past in which

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<sup>44</sup> Rice, 156. British Expeditionary Force (BEF).

<sup>45</sup> Pogue, 23-24 & 138.

‘unity of command’ had been a pious aspiration thinly disguising the national jealousies, ambitions and recriminations of high-ranking officers, unwilling to subordinate themselves or their forces to a commander of different nationality or different service.” General Eisenhower, upon being elected as the Allied Supreme Commander, took his integrated Mediterranean Allied Force Headquarters (AFHQ) model to England where he combined it with elements of COSSAC to form the fully integrated Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF).<sup>46</sup>

General Eisenhower manifested many personality characteristics that made him a good choice to exercise C2 over multinational forces. According to Pogue, those officers that worked with him stressed that he had “the ability to get people of different nationalities and viewpoints to work together,” and “he insisted continually that his staff officers lay aside their national differences.” He further demonstrated the “ability to get along with people of diverse temperaments” which enabled him to exercise patience when working with the diverse egos and personalities of the multinational commanders within his command. It is interesting to note that even the German intelligence derived the same conclusions about General Eisenhower. On the eve of General Eisenhower assuming command of Allied forces in Africa one German intelligence estimate stated that “his strongest point is said to be an ability for adjusting personalities to one another and smoothing over opposite viewpoints.”<sup>47</sup>

As the Supreme Allied Commander for all forces in the European Theater, Rice emphasized that General Eisenhower executed his duties in an exceptional manner and became “the epitome of the successful supreme allied commander.”<sup>48</sup> The SHAEF Chief of Plans supported this fact when he identified three requirements General Eisenhower was able to achieve as the Allied commander:

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<sup>46</sup> Pogue, 8 & 42.

<sup>47</sup> Pogue, 34.

<sup>48</sup> Rice, 159.

I can conceive of no scheme which will work unless three actions are taken: First, firm political decisions made and clear objectives set by national leaders above the theater commander. That is to ensure unity of purpose...If your international high level decisions are to be made at the theater level, I'd say "God help us in unity of purpose"; second, Unity of command to ensure unquestioned and timely execution of directives; third, Staff integration with mutual respect and confidence in combined staffs to ensure sound development of plans and directives fully representing the major elements of the command.<sup>49</sup>

On the other hand, according to Pogue, this did not mean that General Eisenhower did not have formidable obstacles to overcome in the execution of his command. Such issues as General de Gaulle and the French Committee of National Liberation's desire to administer civil affairs in liberated territories as the officially recognized government of France, and dictate how French forces would be commanded and used caused friction within General Eisenhower's command.<sup>50</sup> His ability to manage and find acceptable solutions to such political and strategic issues of the war was paramount to achieving effective multinational C2 during the war.

## **The Persian Gulf War: Desert Shield and Desert Storm**

World War I and II offered many valuable lessons on how to establish effective multinational C2. The fact that the Allies had a common threat to focus on and shared many common traditions also helped. More recently, experience has shown that nations with divergent traditions and interests can and will unite to address global or regional threats. Unfortunately, history has also demonstrated that, despite obvious lessons provided by previous multinational operations, coalitions and alliances either forget or cannot implement the lessons due to their differences. The Persian Gulf War was a good case in point where the important lessons of World War I and II of creating unity of command, among the 40 various nations that made up the anti-Iraqi coalition, was not followed due to cultural differences. Despite the lack of an established

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<sup>49</sup> Major General Harold R. Bull, U.S. Army, Chief of the Plans Directorate in SHAEF as quoted in Rice, "Command and Control: The Essence of Coalition Warfare," 160.

<sup>50</sup> Pogue, 142-157.

unified commander for the entire coalition the Commander in Chief Central Command (CINCCENT), General H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr., was able to establish unity of effort across the diverse coalition that formed to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. As captured in a U.S. Naval War College paper entitled, “Theater Organization: A Command and Control Framework and Analysis,” his ability to establish unity of effort was aided by the “political consensus among these nations that Iraq’s aggression against its neighbor, Kuwait, was unfounded and unacceptable.... This became the basis for the coalition’s common purpose and provided the ‘cohesive glue.’”<sup>51</sup> General Schwarzkopf’s experience from dealing with international forces during his two tours of service in Vietnam played a key role in enabling him to maintain this cohesiveness.

The C2 structure, as described by Rice, which emerged during the Persian Gulf War was a hybrid parallel and lead nation construct with “the United States leading the forces of the Western nations, and Saudi Arabia leading those of the Arab nations.”<sup>52</sup> General Schwarzkopf, in his autobiography *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, expounds on this point when he stated:

we needed a hybrid system like the one we’d used in Vietnam, where Americans had fought under American commanders, South Vietnamese under South Vietnamese commanders, and the actions of the armies were coordinated at the very top. Though this approach violated an age-old principle of warfare called unity of command, I’d seen it in action, and I knew I could make it work better in the gulf than it had in Vietnam.<sup>53</sup>

In “*Lucky War*” *Third Army in Desert Storm*, Dr. Richard M. Swain pointed out that to make this structure work General Schwarzkopf worked with General Khalid, the Saudi armed force commander, to create the “Joint Military Committee” which helped “achieve unity of effort

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<sup>51</sup> Denise B. O’Hora-Webb, Major, USAF, “Theater Organization: A command and Control Framework and Analysis”. U.S. Naval War College Paper, 1995, 14-15.

<sup>52</sup> Rice, 162.

<sup>53</sup> General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Peter Petre, *General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, The Autobiography: It Doesn’t Take a Hero* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 313.

between the Saudi and American militaries while maintaining the independence of both.<sup>54</sup> This C2 structure proved to be the best way to address the political, cultural, language, religious, and interoperability differences present within the coalition.

Rice, in a U.S. Army War College paper titled *Command and Control in Coalition Warfare: Does History Provide Us with Practicable Solutions for Today*, stated that since unity of command was not feasible, CINCCENT would facilitate unity of effort between these parallel-lead nation C2 structures by using a “Coalition Coordination, Communications, and Integration Center (C3IC). This had neither overall command authority nor a direct role in the campaign planning process.”<sup>55</sup> The C3IC was initially established by Lieutenant General John Yeosock, the U.S. Ground Component Commander, upon arriving in theater. As a former Saudi Arabian National Guard modernization program (PM-SANG) officer he was distinctly aware of the need to improve coordination between the U.S. and Saudi forces in a professional and culturally sound manner. With the preponderance of forces in theater he understood that the C3IC would enable him to achieve this coordination. The C3IC was a joint and integrated staff manned by both United States and Saudi Arabian military “liaison officers from every military branch and specialty... air force men with air force men, coast guard men with coast guard men, air-defense planners with air-defense planners, and so on.”<sup>56</sup> An article in *Military Review* by Mark B. Yates, described the mission of the C3IC this way: “It is important to note that the C3IC did not command any units. The C3IC advised the separate commanders and their staffs, and it transmitted orders of one national command chain to the other. The C3IC integrated the efforts of both parties into unity of effort, not unity of command.” General Schwarzkopf incorporated

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<sup>54</sup> Richard M. Swain, “Lucky War” *Third Army in Desert Storm* (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 55.

<sup>55</sup> Anthony J. Rice, Colonel, British Army, “Command and Control in Coalition Warfare: Does History Provide Us with Practicable Solutions for Today.” U.S. Army War College, 1996, 15.

<sup>56</sup> Schwarzkopf, 331.

Lieutenant General Yeosock's C3IC into his own headquarters once he arrived in theater. He adhered to the spirit of keeping a Saudi specialist in control of the center by appointing Major General Paul R. Schwartz, who also had extensive PM-SANG experience, to oversee the operations of the C3IC throughout the war. Schwartz's Saudi Arabian cultural experience proved indispensable to effectively running the C3IC throughout the war.<sup>57</sup>

Despite the C3IC's role in establishing unity of effort among the coalition members, the coalition's C2 structure was not flawless. Among the various C2 structures implemented by CINCENT that experienced friction was the Joint Forces Air Component Commander's (JFACC) organization. According to O'Hora-Webb, the JFACC was "responsible for coordinating and synchronizing all coalition air forces." The Air Tasking Order (ATO) was the tool by which this was accomplished. Even though the JFACC exchanged liaisons with the other service and coalition components, issues arose in the coordination and implementation of the ATO. First of all, the JFACC was not a joint or multinational staff, and was modeled after U.S. Air Force doctrine which caused confusion across the services and coalition. Second, there was a lack of knowledge and experience, within U.S. and coalition forces, with using the ATO system due to the newness of the JFACC and ATO concept. This would lead to disagreements between the JFACC and the Marines regarding who actually exercised authority over Marine aircraft. Additionally, non-U.S. coalition members did not have experience with the JFACC and ATO, resulting in friction in coordinating the overall coalition air campaign. Third, a lack of interoperability between the JFACC, U.S. Navy, and even coalition members prevented the digital exchange of the ATO between them. Many of these issues could have been alleviated if the JFACC and ATO concept had been exercised in a joint or multinational setting prior to the

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<sup>57</sup> Mark B. Yates, "Coalition Warfare in Desert Storm," *Military Review*, 73 (October 1993), 47-48.

Persian Gulf War. Even with these issues, the JFACC structure achieved unparalleled success throughout the war.<sup>58</sup>

Cultural understanding of the Arab culture would play a key role in maintaining the western-Arab coalition and alleviating Saudi Arabian concerns about having American forces based in their country. General Schwarzkopf distinctly understood that in order to effectively work with the Saudi Arabian military he would have to exercise patience “since Saudi culture does not emphasize directness.” When dealing with Saudi Arabian officials and military General Schwarzkopf stated that “decisions that would require fifteen minutes in Tampa or Washington would often consume three hours in Riyadh, as we sipped coffee, told stories, and philosophized.”<sup>59</sup> General Schwarzkopf’s appreciation of the distinct cultural differences that existed between Saudi Arabia and the western nations allowed him to achieve compromises that satisfied both sides.

General Schwarzkopf also demonstrated the ability to compromise with the other members of the coalition in order to satisfy their unique concerns. This particularly manifested in how he used the French coalition forces. Schwarzkopf recalls in his autobiography that due to their “conflicting commercial interests” with regards to Saudi Arabia and Iraq, the French were unsure of how they wanted to participate in the coalition. General Schwarzkopf, through patient political maneuvering, would eventually reach a compromise with the French defense minister to use their forces to guard the coalition’s far western flank. This would keep the lightly armored French forces from being committed against Iraqi tank forces and would relegate them to a more defensive role.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> O’Hora-Webb, 12-13; Charles T. Allen, Major, USAF, “Air Tasking Order Dissemination: Does It Get The Job Done?” U.S. Air Command and Staff College Research Report, 2002, 9 & 15-22. Dissemination of the ATO to coalition partners continues to be a contemporary issue; the author refers to this issue as “the nagging interoperability problems of piping the ATO to coalition partners.”

<sup>59</sup> Schwarzkopf, 334.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 390.

## **International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Afghanistan: An Ongoing Example of Multinational C2**

As was apparent in the previous three historical multinational operation examples, the C2 arrangements amongst participating nations evolved over time based on the unique requirements posed by each operation. The ongoing ISAF mission has followed this trend. After September 11, 2001, combat operations in Afghanistan began with the United States taking a lead nation role with a small contingent of multinational partners, often referred to as the “Coalition of the willing.”<sup>61</sup> After the Northern Alliance defeated the ruling Taliban regime with extensive help from U.S. CIA, Special Operation Forces (SOF), and Air Force assets, ISAF entered the country in early 2002 to assist with only security and reconstruction efforts around the Afghanistan capital of Kabul. The current ISAF C2 structure in Afghanistan has undergone considerable evolution since its inception in 2002.

ISAF, according to Paul Gallis, a specialist in European Affairs, was “created by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386 on December 20, 2001.” As previously mentioned, ISAF initially came under the C2 of the U.S. CENTCOM. At that time, the mission was called Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan (OEF-A). As OEF-A continued to evolve the UN requested NATO participation. In August 2003, NATO officially assumed command of ISAF. Along with UN Security Council Resolution 1510, which authorized ISAF forces to operate outside of Kabul, NATO further expanded its operations. With NATO exercising C2 of ISAF the command structures and relationships changed. The new command structure now had ISAF fall under the C2 of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) with coordination

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<sup>61</sup> The term coalition of the willing is a post-1990 political phrase used to describe military or humanitarian interventions for which the United Nations Security Council cannot agree to mount a full UN peacekeeping operation. This term has been applied to the Australian led INTERFET operation in East Timor and was made famous by President George W. Bush during the U.S. led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Sean Naylor, *Not A Good Day To Die* (New York: Berkley Caliber Books, 2005) provides an insightful understanding of the early C2 structures and their issues during the initial U.S. led operations in Afghanistan.

responsibilities with the United States headquarters in Bagram, Afghanistan. Thus, a parallel command structure emerged with the Commander of European Command (EUCOM), who also serves as Commander SHAPE, commanding ISAF while the CENTCOM commander commanded U.S. forces.<sup>62</sup>

Kenneth Katzman, another specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs, stated in a report to Congress that through 2004 and 2005 ISAF's role expanded with the "assumption of security responsibility for northern and western Afghanistan (Stage 1, Regional Command North, in 2004 and Stage 2, Regional Command West, in 2005, respectively)." In 2006, ISAF's roles and responsibilities further expanded to include security in southern Afghanistan. This expansion, called Stage 3, created Regional Command South. 2006 would also see ISAF eventually assume overall responsibility for security in all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces with the creation of Regional Command East in Stage 4. Once this occurred "the United States put about half the U.S. troops operating in Afghanistan under NATO/ISAF in 'Regional Command East.'" This C2 structure emerged because there were ISAF soldiers now operating in Regional Command East under U.S. C2. U.S. forces in Regional Command East now found themselves answering to two three-star commanders. Finally, unity of command was achieved in October 2008 when the NATO/ISAF and U.S. OEF-A C2 structures were combined into a single integrated command headquarters under NATO. Under this arrangement, CENTCOM was removed from the direct chain of command despite Afghanistan being within CENTCOM's Area of Responsibility (AOR). Even though ISAF has achieved some semblance of unity of command within Afghanistan, CENTCOM is still responsible for all of the Afghan border nations which influence operations within Afghanistan. In the end, this hampers CENTCOM's ability to exercise unity of effort throughout its' assigned AOR because the CENTCOM commander now has to coordinate

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<sup>62</sup> Paul Gallis and Vincent Morelli, *NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance*. CRS Report for Congress (Updated July 18, 2008), CRS-2-4.

with SHAFF when issues spill over the Afghan borders into neighboring nations, and vice versa.<sup>63</sup>

Currently, ISAF consists of forces from 40 different nations which include 26 members of the NATO alliance. C2 of such a diverse coalition has proven to be problematic for General David D. McKiernan, the current ISAF commander in Afghanistan. Compounding C2 challenges are the disparate national caveats which each participating nation deployed under, the mission each originally signed up for, and the lack of interoperability between forces. As outlined in the UN resolution governing ISAF, many nations committed their forces for a stabilization mission. This mission led many nations to impose restrictive Rules of Engagement (ROE) which prohibited their forces from engaging in combat operations. Restrictive ROE has, in turn, led to the operational “overstretch” of those nations that have agreed to conduct combat operations. Additionally, national caveats have reduced the ISAF commander’s flexibility and options. For example, caveats “may prohibit forces from...patrolling at night due to a lack of night-vision equipment. In another example, some governments do not permit their forces to be transferred to other parts of Afghanistan.” Such restrictions have contributed to a reduced unity of effort within ISAF and across Afghanistan.<sup>64</sup>

A lack of command, control, communications, computers and intelligence (C4I) interoperability amongst participating ISAF nations is also hampering C2. The former RC-S commander, Royal Netherlands Army Major General Ton van Loon, emphasized this point when he said C4I is “NATO’s weak spot.” Between traditional western or NATO allies such as Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Germany and the United States this has not been so much of an issue primarily because they have developed compatible C2 systems. C4I issues generally arise among the smaller NATO allies or among non-NATO members of the coalition which do not

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<sup>63</sup> Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy. CRS Report for Congress* (Updated September 29, 2008), CRS-27-29.

<sup>64</sup> Gallis, CRS-3-5.

traditionally train or participate in multinational operations with the primary western and NATO allies mentioned above. Major General van Loon bluntly captures this point when he said, “we have chaotic C2 – This is something we need to solve...Nothing works. The Netherlands and France have the same radios but still can’t talk to each other because they use different software. It’s stupid.” The multitude of national languages further contributes to C4I issues. These C4I issues go beyond the technical aspects. They also encompass the procedures which include how and what information is shared amongst multinational forces. For example, not only do the various national forces have problems actually communicating with one another, they also have different procedures for disseminating and sharing of intelligence. Intelligence sharing is further compounded by classification policies which prevent U.S. forces, with the most robust ISR capabilities, from sharing key information that may have an impact on coalition partners.<sup>65</sup>

## Conclusion

As pointed out in the introduction, multinational military operations are the way of the future. In order to operate effectively within these operations one must study the doctrine, literature, and historical examples that address multinational operations. Without an understanding of the theoretical foundations behind such operations and a thorough historical analysis of past multinational operations the future military practitioner is doomed to relearn the lessons of the past. Using doctrine and four historic multinational military operations, the author identified five key variables for consideration and implementation when forming a coalition or alliance C2 structure.<sup>66</sup> If these variables are implemented, effective multinational C2 can be achieved. The five variables are summarized below.

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<sup>65</sup> Tony Skinner, “Deficiencies in C4I plague ISAF operations,” Jane’s Intelligence and Insight You Can Trust, <http://www8.janes.com> (accessed November 13, 2008), 1.

<sup>66</sup> Though this paper does not address C2 diagrams or propose what an ideal C2 diagram would look like, there are several considerations that the multinational commander should consider when formulating such a diagram. When generating the C2 diagram for a potential multinational operation one must take into consideration the following: the C2 structure used by the designated lead nation, integrated,

First, before a multinational coalition or alliance can engage in any type of military operation it must garner legitimacy from the international arena. One way this can be achieved is to seek legitimacy from an international civil authority like the UN. The international civil authority provides a multinational venue through which coalition or alliance partners can work towards consensus on what the mission, objectives, and the desired end state should be for their operation. Without legitimacy the involved nations will have a difficult time achieving consensus and unity of purpose or effort towards any approved military objectives. Unity of purpose is paramount at all levels because it provides the adhesive that keeps coalitions or alliances, often with disparate goals and interests, working towards agreed upon objectives. It also helps set the conditions for deciding what type of multinational C2 structure must be implemented.

Second, no matter what C2 structure is used, unity of command is a must. The ideal way to achieve unity of command is to use an integrated command structure, with a lead nation command structure as the next best alternative. The integrated C2 structure facilitates unity of command by designating a single overall commander, and ensures that participating alliance or coalition partners are integrated into the command structure at all levels. Integration further enhances the commander's ability to achieve unity of command by providing national subject matter experts, facilitating information flow amongst participating nations, and building trust across the multinational force. If the political and cultural variables are such that an integrated or lead nation C2 structure cannot be achieved, then unity of command must be established through

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or parallel nation(s); what coordination structures need to be established in order to facilitate synchronization between the various participating forces; the different languages and cultures that are represented within the coalition or alliance; the national caveats, ROE, and/or national interests that each nations' forces deploy with; the various national command authority relationships each force deploys under; the doctrine each force is familiar with; the CIS compatibility and interoperability of each force; the various human equation variables that exist among the different participating commanders; the inherent capabilities of each participating force; the requisite support requirements of each nations' forces; and the past C2 relationships or structures that each participating nations' forces are familiar with. These considerations are important, but are not meant to be exclusive due to the unique nature of each multinational operation.

integrated coordination cells and force of personality. This might not be ideal but it can work as history has shown.

Third, an educated human equation is paramount to making whatever multinational C2 structure that emerges work. This is especially the case if some type of parallel or parallel-lead nation structure is used. If a multinational operation is to be effective, the commanders and staffs at all levels, but particularly at the top, must demonstrate respect, rapport, understanding, and above all patience with each other. Developing an informed cultural lens will assist the commander and staff to better cultivate these attributes. Without them, the inherent friction of bringing disparate forces with disparate training, interoperability, and cultures together towards a unified effort will be impossible. History provides excellent examples of top commanders who exemplified these traits, thus setting the tone for effective multinational C2.

Fourth, multinational C2 training must be made a priority if the intricacies of working with different militaries are to be understood and addressed. Multinational C2 training exercises provide an excellent means to share doctrine, create a shared doctrine, address interoperability issues, lay the foundation for the establishment of a cultural lens, and build cohesiveness with allies or potential coalition members prior to engaging in multinational operations. There are times when such multinational training is not feasible, as experienced during the Persian Gulf War, when certain coalition members came from nations who had never trained with the U.S.. In such cases, the multinational commander must create venues during the actual operation that allow newcomers to become familiar with existing multinational C2 procedures, or task organize them under another nation that has similar C2 systems. If multinational training is not conducted before or during an operation, lessons from prior conflicts will be relearned and effectiveness will suffer.

Finally, ensuring an interoperable and compatible CIS among coalition or alliance should be made a high priority. Achieving this goal may be hard, but there are stop-gaps. Potential solutions could take the form of a liberal exchange of liaisons with attached interoperable CIS

equipment and doctrine, or the exchange of compatible equipment with subsequent training included. Both of these solutions are best implemented prior to the actual conduct of operation, but can be executed during operations. In any case, if this variable is not addressed prior to or during a multinational operation, effective C2 amongst the participating nation's forces will be fraught with friction.

If these five variables are not adequately addressed, then effective multinational C2 will be difficult to achieve. Fortunately, doctrine, pertinent literature, and historical analysis provide current and future multinational commanders and staffs important insights into how to establish unity of purpose, command, and subsequent effort. The success of future coalitions and alliances depend on whether we, as military practitioners, apply these insights in order to reduce the inherent friction found in multinational operations.

## **Recommended Essential Variables Required to Establish Effective Multinational C2**

*No single command structure best fits the needs of all alliances and coalitions. Each coalition or alliance will create the structure that will best meet the needs, political realities, and objectives of the participating nations.*

*Joint Publication 3-16, Multinational Operations*  
7 March 2007

As alluded to earlier in this paper, establishing effective multinational C2 is key to successful multinational operations. The fact that there are many forms and structures that multinational C2 can take indicates that there is no template that can be used for all multinational operations since there are too many variables that come into play. On the other hand, there are key persistent C2 variables identified throughout existing multinational operation literature that are necessary for creating an effective multinational force. Despite many of these variables being outlined in existing doctrine, it appears that implementing them is still an issue. In this section, the author will use the doctrine and historical case studies discussed earlier in this paper to

recommend and discuss five key variables which are essential for the establishment effective multinational C2.

## **The Need for Legitimacy and Unity of Purpose**

The military strategic level entails all of the elements of national power as they relate amongst nations considering engagement in multinational operations. According to a 2000 Multinational Interoperability Working Group (MIWG) White Paper prepared for the Multinational Interoperability Council (MIC), within these elements, “nation states are influenced by internal and external factors that shape national interests.” As these national interests converge on international issues, alliances and coalitions often emerge in order to address this shared concern.<sup>67</sup> Each of the historical case studies support this fact; the Allied coalition during WW I emerged due to Germany’s overt aggression towards Belgium, France, and Russia, and the subsequent targeting of U.S. ships to interdict supplies destined for the Allies; the Allied coalition during WW II formed due to Axis powers’ overt attacks in Europe and the Pacific; the Persian Gulf War coalition formed in order to counter Iraq’s aggression towards Kuwait and the threat it posed to the world oil supply; and ISAF emerged as a means to defeat the terrorist threat posed by Al Qaeda.

Normally, the participating nations look for “some recognized international civil authority - i.e. an organization or entity such as the UN - ...to initiate or approve the coalition

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<sup>67</sup> Doctrine, Plans and Procedures Multinational Interoperability Working Group of the Multinational Interoperability Council, “MIWG Report to the Multinational Interoperability Council, Topic: The Lead Nation Concept in Coalition Operations,” (20 December 2000), 6. MIC provides a multinational environment for identifying and articulating actions that, if nationally accepted and implemented, would contribute to more effective coalition operations. It serves as a senior-level, executive body for member nations to address and resolve interoperability issues. MIC membership at the time of publication of this paper included Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The overall goal of the MIC is to provide a venue for exchange of relevant information across national boundaries to support the warfighter in coalition operations.

activity under consideration.”<sup>68</sup> Gaining the support of a recognized international civil authority helps provide international legitimacy and helps establish unity of purpose among participating nations by reducing the impression of unilateral action. ISAF, which was created under a UN Security Council Resolution, is an excellent example of how a broad coalition, based on an existing alliance, can achieve legitimacy under an internationally recognized body. How well unity of purpose is established and articulated will have positive or negative effects on an alliance’s or coalition’s unity of effort, resulting in divergent actions and goals within the multinational operation.

The MIWG Report then states that as the multinational force begins to coalesce, the participating nations’ governments and militaries must begin to plan what the “broad strategic mission...and the desired end state” of the operation are going to be.<sup>69</sup> In some cases, the interested nations may look to the international legitimizing civil authority to take the lead in defining the mission, objectives and end state under which the alliance or coalition will operate. This is particularly true when the civil authority is asked to lead the operation. Within this process, it is imperative the participating nations reach some consensus with regards to the overall mission and desired end state. Otherwise, an alliance or coalition will never achieve unity of effort during the operation. Canna added that the degree and clarity of the achieved consensus may “run the spectrum from general consensus to strong agreement on the use of force.”<sup>70</sup> No matter how strong the consensus is amongst alliance or coalition partners, the primary objective remains to achieve unity of purpose at the strategic level. Consensus amongst alliance or coalition members at the strategic level helps set the stage for planning at the operational level. Subsequently, the strategic guidance is passed to the identified multinational commander so the

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<sup>68</sup> MIWG Report, 6.

<sup>69</sup> MIWG Report, 8.

<sup>70</sup> Canna, 28.

operational level planning can be started. The operational level planning process, according to the MIWG Report, is an “iterative process in which comments and recommended adjustments to the plan” are relayed back up to the respective nation’s political and military entities for input and approval.<sup>71</sup> During WW II, the disagreement between the U.S. and Great Britain of whether to conduct an immediate cross-channel invasion or to attack Germany indirectly through the Mediterranean demonstrated the difficulty in achieving this consensus, and how once achieved it can reinforce unity of purpose.

During the initial stages of planning it is important to establish a set of well defined rules of engagement (ROE). In general terms, the MIWG Report describes ROE as “directives to military forces and individuals that define the circumstances, conditions, degree, and manner in which the use of force or other action may or may not be applied.”<sup>72</sup> The ROE must be simple and easy to understand by all of the nations in the multinational force. It is important to point out that, like creating clearly agreed upon objectives and end states, establishing multinational ROE entails achieving consensus among the participating nations. This is not an easy process, according to Canna, because of the different “domestic laws, national security policies, and varying military capabilities” that each participating nation brings to the operation.<sup>73</sup> Here, the sanctioning civil or international authorities will often play a considerable role in establishing the ROE. Sometimes achieving an agreed upon ROE is not possible. To address this issue, the MIWG Report states that the multinational commander must creatively “tailor the employment of given troop contingents within the context of the ROE” agreed to by their nation in order to maximize their capabilities in the operation. The ISAF mission in Afghanistan is an example of how coalition partners can operate under different ROE, and how this can impact unity of purpose

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<sup>71</sup> MIWG Report, 8.

<sup>72</sup> MIWG Report, 16.

<sup>73</sup> Canna, 29.

and effort. Finally, it is essential for the commander to ensure all members of the multinational force understand each other's ROE because different nations may not respond in a like manner to the same situation.<sup>74</sup>

## **The Need for an Integrated Multinational Command Structure in Achieving Unity of Command**

As the participating nations begin to develop their mission, objectives and end state, they must also determine whether a lead nation (framework), parallel (bi- or multi-national), or integrated (fully integrated) C2 structure will be used. As mentioned earlier in this paper, there is no perfect command structure that fits or meets all of the needs of every possible alliance or coalition operation. The MIWG Report made the case that to achieve consensus on the structure to be used, a C2 structure must be established “that best meets the needs, political realities, constraints, and objectives of the participating nations” with political and cultural considerations playing a dominant role. This was exemplified during the Persian Gulf War when General Schwarzkopf demonstrated cultural awareness in creating the parallel-lead nation C2 structure with the Saudi military as a means to achieve unity of effort between Western and Arab coalition members. Conducting multinational operations within an integrated alliance context is often preferred due to “some degree of commonality in doctrine, some standardization in process, procedure, and material, and political consensus” existing among participants. NATO offers a good example of an integrated command structure “where a NATO commander is designated from a member nation but the staff and the commanders and staffs of subordinate commands are of multinational composition.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> MIWG Report, 16-17.

<sup>75</sup> MIWG Report, 10-11.

On the other hand, coalitions, similar to those established during the Persian Gulf War and ISAF, appear to be the preferred modus operandi as conflicts occur where nations, who are not part of recognized alliances, have national interests that converge with those of established alliances. Due to the ad hoc nature of coalitions, many of the commonalities that exist between alliance members are often not present. The lack of commonality is compounded further by national pride and cultural aspects that must be considered by the participating nations when creating the C2 structure for the multinational operation. Thus, the C2 structure must be formed so that each participating nation's individual interests and objectives are considered.

If the political situation prevents participating nations from agreeing to operate within an integrated command structure, a parallel or combination parallel-lead nation C2 structure, like the one established during the Persian Gulf War, may be a viable option. A parallel command structure, characterized by the absence of an overall commander being designated, is not preferred because of the need for extensive coordination cells to achieve unity of effort and unity of action. This command structure is less efficient and can lead to friction similar to that experienced within the operations of the Gulf War coalition JFACC. The combination parallel-lead nation command structure offers a better solution by designating two or more lead nation commanders which synchronize their actions through coordination cells. Operations Desert Shield and Storm provide good examples of this type of command structure. During these operations, both the United States and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia operated in a lead nation role, coordinating all of their efforts through a series of coalition coordination centers. These coordination cells went beyond synchronizing the entire range of military operations by also coordinating civil-military efforts. The extensive use of coordination cells and centers demonstrated that even when unity of command is absent, unity of effort and action can be achieved.

When undertaking multinational operations, the most ideal C2 structure is an integrated command structure similar to the one General Eisenhower established during WW II, though this

structure is commonly associated with alliances and not coalitions. An integrated command structure permits unity of command through the designation of a single commander, while ensuring participating nations have representation within the headquarters and amongst the war fighting functions. Integration at all levels enhances the overall effectiveness of the operation through partner nation inclusion and facilitates communication throughout the force. Ideally integration must be established at the outset or unity of effort may suffer. According to Rice, early establishment of an integrated C2 structure is easier than attempting to create it while the operation is unfolding or “under pressure when operational reverses are being experienced.”<sup>76</sup> Retired General Robert RisCassi, former Commander in Chief of the United Nations and Republic of Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command; Commander of U.S. Forces, Korea; and Commanding General, Eighth Army reinforced the importance of an integrated C2 structure when he pointed out that “regardless of the nationality of the commander, the staff must represent the cross section of the units under command.”<sup>77</sup> General Schwarzkopf’s C3IC, Eisenhower’s SHAEF staff, and the current ISAF organization strengthen this argument. This multinational integration gives the commander subject matter experts on participating nations’ capabilities and often facilitates the dissemination of critical information to respective forces. This structure also eases the planning process whereby participating forces unique capabilities and political considerations can be vetted in order to create synergy within the operation. Additionally, the integration of participating nations’ soldiers within the headquarters and across the force helps build trust and confidence within the multinational force.

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<sup>76</sup> Rice, 20.

<sup>77</sup> Robert W. RisCassi, Retired General, USA “Principles for Coalition Warfare”. *Joint Force Quarterly*, no 1 (Summer, 1993), 67.

## **The Need for an Educated Human Equation: Necessary Attributes of a Multinational Staff Officer or Non-Commissioned Officer**

In order to establish an effective multinational C2 environment there are several necessary attributes that the commander and his staff must display. These attributes include respect, rapport, knowledge of partners, and patience; Generals Foch, Eisenhower, and Schwarzkopf personified these attributes. Respect is achieved through the acceptance and understanding of partner nations ideas and input, that is informed by an understanding of their unique culture. Without respect, rapport will not be established. Rapport is characterized by the personal relationships that the commander and his staff cultivate with other multinational commanders and their staffs. In turn, these relationships increase cooperation and contribute to unity of effort and command.

Entwined in respect and rapport is an increased knowledge of every partner nation involved in the operation. *Joint Publication 3-16* elaborates by pointing out that the commander and staff must “understand the doctrine, capabilities, strategic goals, culture, religion, customs, history, and values of each partner” in order to integrate their forces effectively into the operation. Implied in the previous tenets is a need for patience throughout the command. Patience is required due to the nature of multinational operations because “effective partnerships take time and attention to develop.”<sup>78</sup> These attributes are further enhanced by the following quote from General Dwight D. Eisenhower:

The written basis for allied unity of command is found in directives issued by the Combined Chiefs of staff. The true basis lies in the earnest cooperation of the senior officers assigned to an allied theater. Since cooperation, in turn, implies such things as selflessness, devotion to a common cause, generosity in attitude, and mutual confidence, it is easy to see that actual unity in allied command depends directly upon the individuals in the field. This is true if for no other reason than no commander of an allied force can be given complete administrative and disciplinary powers over the whole command. It will therefore

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<sup>78</sup> U.S. DOD, *Joint Publication 3-16*, I-3 & I-4.

never be possible to say the problem of establishing unity in any allied command is ever completely solved. This problem involves the human equation and must be met day by day. Patience, tolerance, frankness, absolute honesty in all dealings, particularly with all persons of the opposite nationality, and firmness, are absolutely essential.<sup>79</sup>

These attributes, are all part of the unique human equation. The key to the human equation is the multinational commander. For example, according to U.S. Major General Waldo J. Freeman in a Parameters magazine article titled *The Challenges of Combined Operations*:

The personality of the allied commander is key since the demands of the job are as political as they are military...In addition to lack of clear guidance, rarely will a combined commander have coercive authority over allied commanders and formations. Hence, gaining unity of effort requires a particular leadership style and techniques of command best characterized as collegial. As a result of the usual lack of political clarity and unanimity, allied commanders normally feel that their tasks exceed the authority given and that national tendencies to over supervise and control their own forces undercuts the common cause. Therefore, the 'tone of cooperation' the allied commander sets at the top must permeate the entire structure and is critical to its success.<sup>80</sup>

The ability to establish this tone of cooperation is paramount to creating unity of effort, especially when unity of command is not possible. In the end, during multinational operations, choosing the right multinational commander is critical to fostering an effective C2 structure.

Cultural understanding, a theme throughout the four attributes, deserves further discussion. A U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) funded report titled *Cultural Barriers to Multinational C2 Decision Making* addresses how cultural differences can have significant impacts on multinational C2 due to the "differences in the way people from different countries assess situations, make decisions, coordinate actions, and prepare and execute plans." Addressing these challenges is impossible if the multinational commander and staff fail to

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<sup>79</sup> Alfred D. Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: The War Years III* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1970), 1420-24.

<sup>80</sup> Waldo D. Freeman, MG, U.S. Army, Commander Randall J. Hess, U.S. Navy, and Lt Col Manuel Faria, Portuguese Army, "The challenges of Combined Operations." *Military Review*, U.S. Army Command & General Staff College, vol LXXII, no. 11, November 1992.

take them into consideration during planning and during the conduct of operations. To address these cultural differences the multinational commander and staff must use an objective “cultural lens” in order to understand how participating nations view or approach assigned tasks and missions within the context of a multinational force setting. The cultural lens assists in promoting “decentering” and collaboration through cultural understanding.<sup>81</sup> It is important to remember before we can properly utilize an objective cultural lens to understand another nation, we must either remove our own subjective cultural lens or understand that our cultural lens may further distort our understanding of other nations. Thus, an integrated multinational staff provides the commander and staff a more thorough understanding of the unique cultural perspectives encompassed within the C2 structure.

## **The Need for Multinational Training: Its’ Role in Establishing Effective Multinational C2**

Training is another variable that enhances the effectiveness of multinational C2. According to the MIWG Report, multinational training is “the way to develop an effective...force from national units” by providing a common context in which the strengths and weaknesses of allies and international partners can be understood.<sup>82</sup> This point was reinforced by Field Marshall Montgomery at the beginning of WW II, when he mentioned the lack of multinational training amongst the Allies, prior to the war, as being a key contributor towards their initial defeat by the Axis armies. Training must encompass all elements of C2 within the joint and multinational context. According to RisCassi, the training must be designed to challenge the multinational commanders and staffs “in the most difficult and demanding tasks they may be asked to perform in war and to fathom the weak points that will cause friction under the most trying

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<sup>81</sup> Helen A. Klein, Anna Pongonis, and Gary Klein, “Cultural Barriers to Multinational C2 Decision Making,” DARPA Report (Wright State University, Dayton, OH, 2000), 1-2, 10 & 11.

<sup>82</sup> MIWG Report, 19.

circumstances.” Through difficult and realistic training the C2 structures are stressed so that identified seams which can degrade “synergy and synchronization” within a multinational force can be addressed.<sup>83</sup> Exercising multinational C2 structures and procedures is a must during peacetime training. The issues that arose during the Persian Gulf War due to the lack of prior experience, among the coalition, in implementing the novel JFACC and ATO concepts demonstrate the importance of conducting peacetime training. On the other hand, training must continue once a multinational force deploys. This is particularly pertinent since the nations actually involved in the operation may not have participated in any type of multinational training prior to deploying.

The establishment of a commonly understood and explicit doctrine is an important goal of conducting multinational training, especially in regards to establishing unity of effort. This has explicit and implicit ramifications for C2 interoperability among alliance or coalition partners due to their often divergent national interests and policies in regards to multinational operations. The key to an accepted multinational C2 doctrine is to achieve interoperability through commonly agreed upon C2 techniques and procedures. Multinational training offers a good forum in which to gain this agreement. NATO multinational doctrine, as mentioned in the MIWG Report, is a prime example of how the process of give and take gave rise to “a substantial body of Service oriented NATO Standardization Agreements (STANAGS) over the years.” The American, British, Canadian, and Australian Standardization Program (ABCA) also provides “a number of similar (even identical) Quadripartite Standardization Agreements (QSTAGS)” in order to create synergy and cooperation among multinational partners.<sup>84</sup> Both NATO and ABCA doctrine owe their genesis to extensive allied training over the years. Due to the historical precedence of NATO

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<sup>83</sup> RisCassi, 68.

<sup>84</sup> MIWG Report, 18.

and ABCA involvement in multinational operations these sources of doctrine offer a good reference point when embarking on any future multinational operation.

There are a couple of means by which nations can conduct multinational C2 training. One way C2 training can be exercised is during large field training exercises (FTX) which include large numbers of multinational personnel. A recent example occurred during a July 2008 Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) Bold Quest Plus exercise where United States Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps personnel along with personnel from Canada and the United Kingdom examined “technology and tactics to help improve the process of successfully identifying coalition units on the battlefield.”<sup>85</sup> A second means to train multinational C2 is during command post exercises (CPX). CPXs can either be incorporated into larger multinational FTXs or can be executed as standalone exercises. When executed as a standalone exercise simulations provide a way to incorporate the intricacies and complexity that exist when multinational units are actually involved. A multinational commander should always attempt to include as many units and personnel as possible despite the benefits of using simulations or standalone CPXs.

In order to establish effective multinational C2 training exercises cultural specific training must be emphasized so that participants can develop what Klein called a “cultural lens” that opens their eyes to key differences within other cultures. Focusing on cultural training is critical in teaching “individuals to understand and respect customs and to use appropriate behaviors when interacting with members of foreign cultures.” Each of the case studies discussed in this paper demonstrate how cultural understanding among the top leaders contributed to their success as commanders of multinational forces. This is important for multinational C2 because multinational commanders and headquarters’ staff “must have an awareness and an understanding of divergent styles of reasoning, risk assessment, and decision making” which can influence how

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<sup>85</sup> Casey Bain, “Coalition Exercise Examines Improving Combat Identification,” USJFCOM, <http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2008/pa072308a.html> (accessed October 25, 2008).

coalition or alliance members react during operations. Cultural training must include all multinational participants, not just our own forces, in order to “increase the ability of all participants to anticipate actions and to achieve common ground” or unity of effort throughout the force.<sup>86</sup>

## **The Need for Interoperable Communications and Information Systems (CIS) in Exercising Effective Multinational C2**

The ability of the multinational commander and headquarters to exercise effective C2 over a diverse alliance or coalition rests on adequate CIS interoperability. NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)* defines CIS “as an: assembly of equipment, methods and procedures, and if necessary personnel, organized so as to accomplish specific information conveyance and processing functions.” CIS must be incorporated from the very start of a multinational operation in order to establish effective C2 amongst the force. At the beginning of a multinational operation the:

CIS components, liaison, and technical/logistic support will be provided between force elements and commands as follows: senior and subordinate, supporting and supported, reinforcing and reinforced between adjacent units as directed by the first common senior element, and by a unit gaining an attachment. These rules may have to be followed unless a wholly interoperable communications system is adopted in which case most of the constraints, which the above system would impose, can be removed.<sup>87</sup>

Establishing this CIS framework at the beginning of a multinational operation sets the groundwork for effective communications both laterally and horizontally throughout the operation. As stated though, a wholly interoperable CIS system is optimal, but due to different partner capabilities this is unlikely to be achieved. This became apparent during the implementation of the JFACC and ATO during the Persian Gulf War when a lack of

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<sup>86</sup> Klein, 11-12.

<sup>87</sup> NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)*, December 2002, 13-1.

interoperability amongst U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, and coalition members prevented synchronization of the ATO between them.

The concept of CIS interoperability, as discussed in *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)*, rests on the degree of standardization achieved within the multinational C2 structure. Standardization is further dependent on “compatibility, interchangeability and commonality.” Due to likely differences in partner CIS capabilities, “compatibility is often the most practical level of interoperability that can be achieved, which in CIS is the ability of systems to provide services and information to (or accept services and information from) other systems, and it is absolutely essential for the force if it is to be employed as a coherent organization.” *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)* further states that there are five prerequisites that must be met before CIS interoperability can be achieved; they are: development of joint force CIS concepts and definitions plus the creation of common operating environments; harmonization of the information, semantics and development of data management; provision and implementation of agreed operational, procedural and technical standards; the responsibility for delivering information and services to other force elements is clearly stated in each commander’s mission; and common training and exercise.<sup>88</sup> Despite NATO doctrine clearly outlining these prerequisites, achieving them is not easy. For example, even within ISAF, which is an ongoing operation, there are still issues with interoperability and compatibility in basic communications equipment amongst coalition partners. The ISAF example reinforces the fact that without a holistic approach to CIS across the force, it is likely that effective multinational C2 will be hampered with a resultant degradation in unity of command and effort.

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<sup>88</sup> NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)*, 13-2.

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